

Equality Analysis Report -

Details of proposal:

The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval to adopt a healthier food and drink advertising policy for council-owned sites in Sefton.

Ramifications of Proposal:

The aim of the proposal is to present the opportunity to implement a healthier food and drink advertising policy which requires brands to swap unhealthy foods and drinks for healthier options, as part of the Council efforts to prioritise our resident's health whilst considering the impact on climate change and reducing inequalities at negligible cost to the council. The proposal provides evidence that the impact of unhealthy advertising will not be felt equally across society, with lower income households facing mounting challenges when it comes to managing finances with advertising focused on calorie dense food rather than calorie nutritious food. Using best practice and evidence from other areas, the proposal outlines how healthy advertising can contribute to a positive change in consumer habits, whilst making clear, the connection with unhealthy advertising and its impact on obesity and overweight in Sefton.

The proposal is linked to 3 core policy areas.

- tackling inequality
- tackling the rise in obesity
- contributing to reducing the negative impact on climate change through take away waste and pollution caused by fast food transportation.

Are there any protected characteristics that will be disproportionately affected in comparison to others?

See Appendix 1

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and Maternity
-

Consultation: None specifically in Sefton

Evidence from other areas has shown a reduction in calories purchased therefore promoting a healthier lifestyle.

[Transport for London's junk food advertising restrictions linked to reductions in high fat, salt and sugar product purchases | LSHTM](#)

Evidence from other areas has shown a reduction in calories purchased therefore promoting a healthier lifestyle. It is recognised that people with restricted mobility find it harder to maintain a healthy weight. This policy improves the obesogenic environment.

[Transport for London's junk food advertising restrictions linked to reductions in high fat, salt and sugar product purchases | LSHTM](#)

The University of Sheffield have used the Transport for London research to produce modelled estimates on the possible reduction in obesity cases should this type of restriction be adopted in other local authorities and researchers have indicated a positive impact relationship since replacing unhealthy advertising with healthier options.¹ In addition, an independent evaluation of Transport for London's policy conducted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine found there has been an estimated 6.7% decrease in average weekly household purchases of energy from high fat, salt and sugar products, and the average weekly purchases of chocolate and sweet confectionery fell by 19.4%. This equates to a 1000 calorie decrease in energy from unhealthy food purchases in Londoners' weekly shopping.²

The collective action across Cheshire and Merseyside is supported by several other sub-regional stakeholders including the Beyond Programme for Children and Young People (NHS), the Strategic Overweight and Obesity Project (part of the Cheshire and Merseyside Cancer Alliance) and the Health Equity Group. The proposed healthier food and drink advertising policy will also reflect the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 which states that all public bodies are required to consider how their services impact on the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area. It is also in line with the World Health Organisation recommendation that all countries should implement advertising restrictions on high fat, salt and sugar food and drink, especially for children.

¹ <https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12966-022-01331-y>

² <https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12966-022-01331-y>

Is there evidence that the Public Sector Equality Duties will be met?

¹ <https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12966-022-01331-y>

² <https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12966-022-01331-y>

Unhealthy advertising increases the challenges for people who are trying to achieve or maintain a healthy weight and implementation of this policy will support Sefton Council to meet multiple priorities:

- a. reducing inequalities
- b. improved health - specifically diet-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cancer, heart disease and tooth decay as well as reducing dependency on health and social care.
- c. support policy on climate change
- d. at negligible cost - this policy is expected to maintain advertising revenues and has done so when implemented by other local authorities
- e. support the aims of Sefton's Healthy Weight Plan.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that those subject to the Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.*
- 2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*
- 3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.*
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.*
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.*

What actions will follow if proposal accepted by cabinet & Council?

Include details of any mitigating action and ongoing monitoring to address any of the equality impacts highlighted above

Approval of this proposal will support the Council as it addresses the wider issues of tackling inequality, obesity and overweight as well as its intention to reduce the impact of climate change locally. On going monitoring of the Child Poverty Strategy

and obesity and overweight action plans will consider the longer-term impact of this policy within periodic consultation and engagement with children and families.

Obesity is one of the biggest health problems this country faces. Obesity is a major cause of ill health in the UK, increasing the risk of developing heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer. Relatively small but consistent levels of excessive calorie consumption is the key driver of obesity. Evidence shows that children's food preferences and consumption particularly can be influenced by advertising.³ Although some high fat, salt and sugar foods (HFSS) will be purchased as part of a balanced diet and not contribute to obesity, they nevertheless represent the most focused group of adverts to target to reduce excess calorie consumption while minimising the impact on the wider market. Adjusting the consumption patterns of children particularly by restricting their exposure to HFSS advertising therefore offers possible benefits in the long-term to both society and the individual. For example, there may be an associated reduction in tooth decay in children. Similarly, there is evidence linking excess weight to negative emotional and mental wellbeing.⁴

Foods and drinks with low nutritional value and a big climate impact pose a double threat. These products sacrifice the environment, while also not meeting dietary requirements and encouraging over-consumption. Globally, food contributes roughly 30% of overall greenhouse gas emissions. Beef, palm oil, sugars and cocoa are leading causes of deforestation and extinction and very prominent in high fat, salt and sugar products.

Whilst locally individual packaging and the convenience of 'drive through' and 'food on the go' options for foods high in fat, salt and sugar increases the amount of and opportunities for littering, impacting our local area and wildlife. Although specific brands are not banned from advertising it is hoped that there will be a small reduction in purchases of this type of food.

³ [Impact assessment \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁴ [Impact assessment \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)